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UNCLAS WELLINGTON 000341

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/PD-AGRIMES, EAP/ANP-DRICCI, EAP/P-KBAILES,
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SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND IVs EMERGE AS MEDIA LEADERS

11. BEGIN SUMMARY: While some New Zealand participants in the IV program remain in their same influential roles, others have had diverse experiences, including being offered employment by Al Jazeera, becoming the host of a radio show, and being promoted to management. Until recently we were able to send two journalists per year on IV programs, but recent cutbacks are making this increasing difficult. We hope that any negative impact will be offset by the establishment of programs like the Edward R. Murrow program. From our experience there are few programs that make as much impact on present and future decision-makers as the first-hand understanding gained through participation in the International Visitor Program. END SUMMARY.

12. PARTICIPANT UPDATES (Participation date in parentheses):

CLIFF JOINER (October 2002): Cliff Joiner was recently offered a job working for Al Jazeera International but turned it down because of concerns about his daughter's schooling. Since Cliff's participation as an IV he left TVNZ to work for rival network, TV3. Cliff now works in Christchurch, where he often acts as bureau chief with responsibility for the network's entire South Island coverage. (Note that we are about to launch a Virtual Presence Post for the South Island to increase our impact there.) Both television news networks regard Cliff as a possible future political editor.

KATHRYN RYAN (July-Aug 2004): Next week Kathryn will cease to be Radio New Zealand's political editor because her talents have been recognized and rewarded with her own daily three-hour program, Nine-to-Noon. Nine-to-Noon has a nationwide audience and rates second only to the network's flagship breakfast program, Morning Report.

GUYON ESPINER (August-Sept 2001): When Guyon went on an IV program, he was the political editor of the weekly newspaper, The Sunday Star Times. Soon after returning to New Zealand Guyon switched media. Guyon left The Sunday Star Times and joined TVNZ as their deputy political editor. He has since been promoted to become the political editor of the nation's most-watched television network.

AUDREY YOUNG (May 2004): Audrey continues to be the Political Editor of New Zealand's largest daily newspaper, The New Zealand Herald.

NICK VENTER (October 2002): When he participated in his IV program, Nick was the Dominion Post's political editor; he has since been promoted to management by becoming the newspaper's Assistant Editor. He is also responsible for writing most of the leader content (editorials) for the newspaper. Nick's latest editorial was on the bilateral relationship and was entitled, "Let's Make Up and Be Friends."

GARTH BRAY (October 2004): Since his return to New Zealand, Garth has worked on TVNZ's flagship current affairs program, Sunday, and has been the fill-in/back-up presenter and interviewer for Agenda, TVNZ's weekly half-hour program on diplomatic and political happenings. In June Garth will become TVNZ's Australian Bureau Chief, a role reserved for the network's rising stars. In his new job Garth will continue to investigate New Zealand's role in regional security and the relationships between the three former ANZUS allies.

ALI IKRAM (June 2005): Ali is now regarded as so integral to TVNZ's coverage that the network has made him a prominent face in advertising for the network. TVNZ also asked him to move from Wellington to their head office in New Zealand's most multi-cultural city, Auckland. He is widely regarded as the New Zealand journalist with the best contacts in the Islamic community; and while he continues to cover a wide variety of issues, he has increasing responsibility for the channel's intercultural and religious coverage.

JUSTINE SHORT (June-July 2002): Justine continues to be Chief of Staff at TV3 the country's second-largest television network. The network's ratings are sky-rocketing, and viewer numbers in the influential Auckland market have overtaken their more established competitor, TVNZ.

13. Open-mindedness, field of influence, and the multiplier effect of potential candidates are prime considerations during our selection process, and investment in Embassy contacts outside the media have also yielded positive, sustained results. For example, NZ Labour Member of Parliament and former IV, WINNIE LABAN (November-December 2002) recently requested an Embassy meeting for her entire staff. Ms. Laban wanted to challenge her staff's perceptions of America and

American foreign policy.

15. We repeat that we regard IV programs as exceptionally influential and maintain that the impact of such programs should not be underestimated. We underscore our appreciation and gratitude to the team in the EAP International Visitor Bureau.

Thanks and regards, McCormick